

THE CIA PERSONNEL SYSTEM

Authority

The CIA personnel system is established under the special authority of the Director of Central Intelligence to serve the particular needs of the Agency. Although the Agency is not in the competitive service and is exempt from the provisions of the Classification Act, it follows the concepts and principles of that Act insofar as practicable in the management of personnel resources.

Delegation

Within this overall framework, the Agency operates a diverse set of systems roughly based on organizational and skill needs. Recently it has moved to obtain greater uniformity and effectiveness throughout the Agency but with sufficient flexibility for each Directorate to accommodate its unique needs and mission. This consolidation--accompanied by the specification of objectives and Directorate responsibilities--followed an extensive study of the personnel systems and a report to the Director and Management Committee late in 1973.

Description

Today there are five major services which coincide with the major line units (Directorates) headed by Deputy Directors. They are Operations (DDO), Intelligence (DDI), Science and Technology (DDS&T), and Administration (DDA). The fifth service, known as the Executive (E) Group, combines a number of top staff functions including: the staff to the DCI in his community-staff functions; legal, the comptroller, and budget.

Depending on the function and type of skills involved, there is variety in the way the services operate. For example, the S&T service is comprised largely of scientists and engineers. Most of these people are recruited from graduate schools. Some of the technical talent comes in at mid- or top-level, often from contractors where much of the technical work is performed. Since high value is placed on replenishing the level of knowledge, there is a considerable in-and-out at the middle and upper levels, although poor economic conditions may depress the out flow.

In contrast, the DDO service, which must train its people in relatively unique skills and which must reassign them similarly to the Foreign Service, has been on a rank-in-the-man basis since 1952. Its recruitment is largely at the entry grades by competitive examination. The typical career is about 20-25 years, with an average of about 10 years overseas. Although in the past typical overseas tours were 2 years, the Agency is moving more toward longer tours that increase the productive time of a tour.

Administration

In the administration of this system, the DCI, who has the underlying authorities, spends as much time on personnel matters as practicable and conducts individual ^{annual} reviews with each of the Deputy Directors concerning the overall ^{annual} personnel ^Dplans (quantitative goals) and the personnel ^Ddevelopment ^Dprogram (qualitative goals concerning career development).

He is supported by the Management Committee, made up of the four Deputy Directors plus other designated top-level officials. The Committee

reviews significant personnel policies and provides needed policy cohesion to Agency personnel management.

The Director of Personnel advises the Director in setting basic policy and Agency-wide management processes and practices which guide the Deputy Directors. He also operates certain common personnel functions such as recruiting, overseas processing, insurance and other employee benefit and service programs. His job is to assure equity and consistency across the various systems, to be a force for progress in introducing new practices, and to be an independent check on effectiveness.

The Deputy Directors are specifically responsible for operating the personnel systems in their Directorates. They and their subordinate Office Heads are responsible for the selection, training, development, promotion, and assignment decisions affecting their personnel, within Agency guidelines and against controlling objectives. They take this job seriously and devote much attention to it.

Evaluation

The keystone to control when authority has been delegated is evaluation of performance against plans and objectives. There are two interrelated programs that pertain to the planning side of personnel management and one that pertains to the management side, per se.

The Annual Personnel Plan is prepared each summer, establishing goals of accomplishment for each Directorate in the major areas of its personnel management responsibilities. These targets are defined in statistical terms and are the basis for the Director's annual review of the progress of each Directorate. The Director of Personnel provides the Director with an analysis of the data in advance of these meetings.

Closely related is the Personnel Development Program which focuses on personnel management action to develop executive and professional talent. It consists of an estimate of losses and changes in professional requirements over a three-year period. While planning at the higher levels may match names against expected vacancies, ^{and for the development of certain individuals} at the lower levels developmental profiles outline the pattern of development and advancement expected for officers in each significant occupational area.

With respect to the evaluation of personnel management, each Directorate has been assigned responsibilities which are evaluated periodically by the Office of Personnel. Last July, an employee bulletin summarized the progress to date in the implementation of the new personnel approaches.

Operations

The Agency places much attention on position classification and the establishment of personnel and position requirements tied to budget and personnel ceilings reviewed by OMB and approved by the President. Personnel requirements are expressed in terms of authorized positions which are classified by Agency-wide standards in line with those of the competitive (Civil) service. Promotions are tied to authorized grade structure, positions, and controls over average grade.

The Director of Personnel manages nation-wide recruitment operations to serve the requirements for new employees throughout the Agency. Some requirements are filled through direct recruitment of employees who possess specialized skills at the required levels while other requirements are filled by the recruitment of people with ^{new} potential for developing required special skills through in-service training. Political consid-

erations play no role in the recruitment process. Nor is there a concentration of academic sources, such as the "Ivy League" schools. The establishment of links between annual personnel planning and recruiting has assisted a successful augmentation of hiring qualified minority candidates.

The Agency emphasizes career development through an interrelated system of (1) personnel evaluation based on supervisory appraisal and comparative ranking by Boards, (2) counseling, (3) training, and (4) assignment. Promotions are based on competitive selection. Involuntary separation may result from poor performance or a low comparative ranking or from a finding that the individual (or his unit) is no longer required. On the positive side, our policies stress bringing individual performance to high standards that will support accomplishment of Agency objectives.

Sources:

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The CIA Personnel System (no date)

James Clark, (Murphy Commission) Memo on the CIA Personnel System
17 April 1975

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